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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 000424

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEA HQ FOR ADMINISTRATOR TANDY
STATE FOR WHA/CAR
DRL
S/CRS
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)
TREASURY FOR JEFFREY LEVINE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/30/2011
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [HA](#)
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR DEA ADMINISTRATOR TANDY'S VISIT TO
HAITI, MARCH 7

Classified By: Classified by Charge d'Affairs Thomas C. Tighefor reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

1. (C) Post retransmits below, beginning para 3, Ambassador Sanderson's message to DEA Administrator Tandy, prepared in January in advance of her visit subsequently rescheduled for March 7. Since the original transmission of that message, post has continued to engage with various senior officials on issues related to counter-narcotics with varying success. The GoH has agreed for the stationing of DEA assets in Haiti during the upcoming Rum Punch operation. Post's DEA office continues to conduct training with vetted members of Haiti's counter-drug unit (BLTS, in French) and prospects for increased joint operations are promising. President Preval, however, continues to criticize the U.S. for what he characterizes as lack of sufficient action in interdicting narcotics shipments before they arrive in Haiti. He gives every indication that he will make this criticism publicly during the Santo Domingo counter-drug summit on March 16.

2. (C) As the Ambassador explains below, President Preval has a limited understanding of the challenges and constraints we face in combating narcotics flows in the region. In your meeting with Preval, you should directly address why we cannot unilaterally interdict drug shipments arriving in Haiti by air and sea, and why joint collaboration continues to offer the most promise. Preval has countered that we appear to focus effectively on illegal immigrants leaving Haiti for the U.S. in the Windward Channel. He asks why we cannot devote the same effort to illegal shipments arriving on Haiti's south coast. Illegal immigration and narcotics trafficking are, of course, entirely different challenges. Despite his misconceptions, Preval's engagement on drugs is welcome. Your visit is an opportunity to lay out for him our capabilities, clearly state what we can and cannot accomplish unilaterally, and to re-emphasize the indispensability of working-level law enforcement cooperation.

3. (C) Begin message from Ambassador Sanderson to Administrator Tandy: We in the Embassy are very much looking forward to your visit to Port-au-Prince on Wednesday and believe you

will find it a useful trip. President Preval is equally eager to meet with you. In a recent speech to Parliament, Preval stated that drug trafficking was the main threat to his country's security and he charged the U.S. and other producing and consuming nations with failure to address the issue effectively, leaving Haiti in the lurch. Drugs have always loomed large on Preval's horizon: in a visit to Washington prior to his inauguration last year, he told National Security Advisor Hadley that they would be a major preoccupation as President. I have had repeated conversations with him on the matter since that time. Most recently, he raised the issue with visiting Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) and the two examined air tracks of drug flights from Colombia and Venezuela in detail during their session.

14. (C) Despite Preval's interest in the topic, however, his understanding of what is happening here and what the United States can do with our limited resources is extremely simplistic. We have briefed his staff on our activities here and on the current trafficking situation, but little of that information appears to trickle upwards. Preval has publicly stated that the U.S. and other consuming nations owe Haiti more support and assistance. He argues that the 1998 Maritime Interdiction Agreement he signed with then-Secretary of State Albright gave the USG responsibility for the interception of boats carrying drugs to Haiti's shores and he often dramatically demands to know how many planes have been intercepted, how many boats turned around as a result of U.S. actions in the war on drugs. Both INL Assistant Secretary Patterson and Senator Nelson have attempted to explain to him the limited nature of our maritime agreement but to no avail. He does indeed seek a closer relationship with the United States in the drug war, but he also strongly believes that it

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is our responsibility to "fix" Haiti's drug trafficking problems

15. (C) Preval knows that his fragile country, with its 1700 mile undefended coast line; its small, often corrupt police force; and failed judicial system, is no obstacle whatsoever to drug traffickers. The President's concerns about drug trafficking's pervasive impact on this fledgling democracy is well founded: we are seeing some indication that drug money may be seeping into the political culture again as it did under Aristide. I believe that, although his fixation on drugs may be politically expedient in the current security climate, Preval is indeed committed to trying to address the trafficking issue and wants help. He returned from the meetings in Nicaragua, where he talked at length with Colombian President Uribe, energized on the matter. Uribe, Preval and Dominican President Fernandez have agreed to hold a "drug summit" in Santo Domingo on March 15 which will discuss regional counter drug cooperation. It is, Preval told me, the first such effort on Hispanola. (Note. Preval has told me that Chavez will not be invited to the conclave, but today's press reports state otherwise. End Note.)

16. (C) In your meeting, Preval will be looking to you for an explicit commitment that the U.S. is ready to broaden its counter-trafficking effort in Haiti, reinforce its presence on the ground, and deal with the drug problem for a country that can't. In this, Preval has been encouraged by others with whom he has talked about drugs, including DR President Fernandez and the UN Special representative here, Edmund Mulet. I recommend that you carefully lay out for the President what we are doing operationally in the region, as well as providing him with an overview of our training and assistance programs. However, a key theme of your presentation, I believe, should be one of partnership. The United States cannot "fix" Haiti's trafficking problems alone. There are things that Haiti, despite its limited resources, can do. These include prosecuting drug traffickers to the extent of the legal system's ability, responding positively and expeditiously to USG agencies offers of training, and providing adequate material support

to the HNP's counter drug unit. In addition, the Haitian Financial Intelligence Unit, UCREF, provides a vital function as Haiti starts the fight against money laundering.

17. (C) I look forward to seeing you soon and welcoming you to Haiti. There are enormous challenges ahead but I am confident that your visit marks an important new phase in our counter narcotics relationship with Haiti.

End Cable Text

John C Mariz 03/02/2007 01:24:57 PM From DB/Inbox: John C Mariz

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